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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/49/613/Add.1)]

49/214. International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that one of the purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, is the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing the value and diversity of the cultures and the forms of social organization of the world's indigenous people,

Recalling its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, by which it proclaimed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, commencing on 10 December 1994,

Conscious of the need to improve the economic, social and cultural situation of the indigenous people, with full respect for their distinctiveness and their own initiatives,

Reaffirming that the goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health,

Recalling that, beginning in the first year of the Decade, one day of every year shall be observed as the International Day of Indigenous People,

Welcoming the recommendation of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights that the International Day be observed every year on 9 August, that date being the anniversary of the first day of the meeting of the Working Group in 1982,

Also welcoming the appointment of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights as Coordinator for the Decade,

Recognizing the importance of considering the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system in the framework of the Decade, and recalling that the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1994/28 of 4 March 1994, 1/ requested the Working Group to give priority consideration to the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people,

Recalling its request to the Coordinator to coordinate the programme of activities for the Decade in full collaboration and consultation with Governments, competent bodies, the International Labour Organization and other specialized agencies, and indigenous and non-governmental organizations,

Recalling also its request to specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to consider with Governments and in partnership with indigenous people how they can contribute to the success of the Decade, and welcoming recommendations received in this regard,

Recognizing the importance of consultation and cooperation with indigenous people in planning and implementing the programme of activities for the Decade, the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels,

Recalling its invitation to indigenous organizations and other non-governmental organizations to consider the contributions they can make to the success of the Decade, with a view to presenting them to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 1992/255 of 20 July 1992, in which the Council requested United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to ensure that all technical assistance financed or provided by them was compatible with international instruments and standards applicable to indigenous people, and encouraged efforts to promote coordination in this field and greater participation of indigenous people in the planning and implementation of projects affecting them,

Convinced that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world,

Recognizing that indigenous people can and should be able through appropriate mechanisms to make their distinct contributions to humanity,

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1/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 4 (E/1994/24), chap. II, sect. A.

Mindful of the relevant recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the International Conference on Population and Development, in particular chapter 26 of Agenda 21 2/ on recognizing and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities,

Welcoming the proposal for an Indigenous Youth Cultural Olympics to be held at Manila in 1995, in conjunction with the Decade and the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations,

Determined to promote the enjoyment of the rights of indigenous people and the full development of their distinct cultures and communities,

1. Takes note of the preliminary report of the Secretary-General of 28 September 1994 on a comprehensive programme of action for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People 3/ and the annexes to that report;

2. Decides to adopt the short-term programme of activities for 1995 contained in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General, and invites the Commission on Human Rights, at its fifty-first session, to consider the short-term programme with a view to adjusting or supplementing it if required;

3. Invites Governments to submit written comments to the Secretary-General, by the end of August 1995, on the preliminary report and its annexes, with a view to the preparation of a final comprehensive programme of action for the Decade, to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session;

4. Decides that the Decade will have an operational focus to implement its goals and that its theme will be "Indigenous people: partnership in action";

5. Encourages the Commission on Human Rights to consider the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, contained in the annex to resolution 1994/45 of 26 August 1994 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 4/ with the participation of representatives of indigenous people, on the basis of and in accordance with appropriate procedures to be determined by the Commission, with a view to achieving the adoption of a draft declaration by the General Assembly within the Decade;

6. Recognizes the importance of considering the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations during the Decade, as recommended in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 5/ adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna in June 1993, and

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2/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (Vol.I and Vol.I/Corr.1, Vol.II, Vol.III and Vol.III/Corr.1) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

3/ A/49/444.

4/ See E/CN.4/1995/2 - E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/56.

5/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

requests the Commission on Human Rights to make recommendations in this regard;

7. Recognizes the importance of strengthening the human and institutional capacity of indigenous people to develop their own solutions to their problems, and for these purposes recommends that the United Nations University consider the possibility of sponsoring, in each region, one or more institutions of higher education as centres of excellence and the diffusion of expertise, and invites the Commission on Human Rights to recommend appropriate means of implementation;

8. Decides that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People shall be observed every year during the Decade on 9 August, requests the Secretary-General to support the observance of the Day, from within existing budgetary resources, and encourages Governments to observe the Day at the national level;

9. Expresses its appreciation for the work undertaken by the Goodwill Ambassador, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, and expresses the hope that she will continue to play an important role in promoting the Decade;

10. Recommends that special attention be given to improving the extent and effectiveness of the participation of indigenous people in planning and implementing the activities for the Decade, including through the recruitment, where appropriate, by relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies of staff from among indigenous nationals of Member States, consistent with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, within existing resources, and through consultation with Governments at the national, regional and international levels;

11. Recommends for this purpose that a second technical meeting on the planning of the Decade be convened immediately prior to the thirteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, to be supported from within existing budgetary resources, and urges Governments, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and, in particular, indigenous people's organizations to participate actively in that meeting, in accordance with agreed procedures;

12. Decides to consider at a later session the convening of meetings for planning and review purposes at appropriate intervals during the Decade, and urges Governments, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and, in particular, indigenous people's organizations to participate actively in such meetings;

13. Recommends that the Secretary-General:

(a) Establish, during the first quarter of 1995, the Voluntary Fund for the Decade and include that Fund in the annual Pledging Conference for Development Activities held at United Nations Headquarters;

(b) Request United Nations representatives in countries where there are indigenous people to promote, through the appropriate channels, greater participation of indigenous people in the planning and implementation of projects affecting them;

(c) Urge relevant United Nations conferences convened during the Decade to promote and facilitate to the extent possible, and as appropriate, the effective input of the views of indigenous people;

(d) Ensure that information about the programme of activities for the Decade and opportunities for indigenous people to participate in those

activities is disseminated in all countries and to the greatest possible extent in indigenous languages, to be financed from within existing budgetary resources;

(e) Report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on progress made at the national, regional and international levels in accomplishing these objectives;

14. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to take into account the special concerns of indigenous people and the goals of the Decade in the fulfilment of his functions;

15. Requests the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, bearing in mind the contribution that indigenous people have the capacity to make, to establish a unit within the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat to support its activities related to indigenous people, in particular to plan, coordinate and implement activities for the Decade;

16. Invites the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to consider the appointment of a fund-raiser who could develop new sources of funding for the Decade;

17. Requests the Administrative Committee on Coordination, through its inter-agency process, to consult and coordinate on the Decade, with a view to assisting the Coordinator of the Decade to fulfil his function, and to report on activities of the United Nations system in relation to the Decade to the General Assembly in each year of the Decade;

18. Invites United Nations financial and development institutions, operational programmes and specialized agencies, in accordance with the existing procedures of their governing bodies:

(a) To give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, including by the preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence;

(b) To launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in collaboration with indigenous people, for strengthening their community-level initiatives, and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts;

(c) To designate focal points for coordination with the Centre for Human Rights of activities related to the Decade;

19. Encourages Governments to support the Decade by:

(a) Contributing to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Decade;

(b) Preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people;

(c) Seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters which affect them;

(d) Establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade

are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people;

20. Also encourages Governments to consider contributing, as appropriate, to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the achievement of the goals of the Decade;

21. Appeals to Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to support the Decade by identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people;

22. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fiftieth session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

94th plenary meeting
23 December 1994